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LETTER

TO

M. JEAN-BAPTISTE SAY,

ON THE

COMPARATIVE EXPENSE

OF

FREE AND SLAVE LABOUR.

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By ADAM HODGSON.

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LIVERPOOL, PRINTED, 1823:

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TO

WILLIAM ROSCOE, Esq. PRESIDENT,

AND TO

THE OTHER MEMBERS

OF

THE LIVERPOOL SOCIETY

FOR THE MITIGATION AND GRADUAL ABOLITION OF SLAVERY,

THE FOLLOWING LETTER,

PRESENTED TO THEM,

AND PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY

INSCRIBED.



## LETTER, &c.



SIR,

**IT** is with much concern that I observe, in your excellent and popular work on Political Economy, the sentiments you express on the subject of the comparative expense of free and slave labour. Accustomed to respect you highly as an enlightened advocate of liberal principles, and to admire the philanthropic spirit which pervades your writings, I cannot but regret deeply, that opinions so calculated to perpetuate slavery, should have the sanction of your authority; and that, while you denounce the slave system as unjustifiable, you admit, that, in a pecuniary point of view, it may be the most profitable.

As this subject is of peculiar importance at the present moment, when efforts are making both in this country and in France, to effect the gradual abolition of slavery in the Colonies, I will not apologize for addressing you. The same regard to truth and candour, which secured your reluctant assent to an opinion, little in unison, I am sure, with your feelings, will lead

you to examine, with impartiality, any facts or arguments which I may adduce in my attempt to controvert it. Many of them, I am aware, must be familiar to you, but possibly even these may appear in a new light, and derive some additional force, from their connexion with others which have not fallen under your observation.

The expense of slave-labour resolves itself into the annual sum, which, in the average term of the productive years of a slave's life, will liquidate the cost of purchase or rearing, and support in old age, if he attain it, with interest, and the sum annually expended in his maintenance.

If we omit the case of purchased slaves, and suppose them to be bred on the estate, (and as breeding is now admitted to be, under ordinary circumstances, the cheapest mode of supply, your argument will gain by the supposition,) the expense of free labour will resolve itself into precisely the same elements, since the wages paid to free labourers of every kind, must be such as to enable them, one with another, to bring up a family, and continue their race.

Now it is observed by Adam Smith, "The wear and tear of a free servant, is equally at the expense of his master, and it generally costs him much less than that of a slave. The fund destined for replacing and repairing, if I may say so, the wear and tear of the slave, is commonly managed by a negligent master, or careless overseer. That destined for performing the same office with regard to the freeman, is managed by the freeman himself. The disorders which generally prevail in the economy of the rich,

“ naturally introduce themselves into the management  
 “ of the former ; the strict frugality and parsimonious at-  
 “ tention of the poor, as naturally establish themselves  
 “ in that of the latter.” The Russian political econo-  
 mist, Storch, who had carefully examined the system  
 of slavery in that extensive Empire, makes the same  
 remark almost in the same words. Hume expresses  
 a similar opinion in decided terms ; and I have now  
 before me a statement from one of the slave districts  
 in the United States, in which it is estimated that,  
 taking the purchase-money or the expense of rearing a  
 slave, with the cost of his maintenance, at their actual  
 rates, and allowing fifteen years of health and strength,  
 during which to liquidate the first cost, his labour will  
 be at least 25 per cent. dearer than that of the free  
 labourer in the neighbouring districts.

It is observed by a planter, in a letter published by  
 the Hon. Joshua Steele, a member of the council in  
 Barbadoes, under the signature of Philo Xylon, “ The  
 “ truth is, that although we plant much more ground  
 “ than should be sufficient to produce provisions to  
 “ feed our labouring slaves, yet the negroes, feeling  
 “ that they have no direct property in these crops, and  
 “ that we must buy more to supply them if those crops  
 “ fall short, the cultivation is negligently performed  
 “ by them, and the produce is afterwards stolen by  
 “ the negro watchmen or their confederates, so that  
 “ we seldom reap a third part of what should be the  
 “ natural and probable produce. But if we could  
 “ depend on their diligence and economy, in cultiva-  
 “ ting rented tenements, and carefully storing their  
 “ crops, they might undoubtedly be maintained bet-



“ter than they are, and at a much smaller expense  
 “than it costs us at present; not only by our wasting  
 “three times as much land as might be necessary for  
 “that purpose, but also by our cultivating it with a  
 “reluctant gang to our loss.” From inquiries made  
 with reference to this subject, it appears that the average weekly expense in the Liverpool Workhouse, for provisions, including ale, wine, spirits, tea, sugar, butter, &c. given to the sick, is 2s 6½d per head, exclusive of rent; while the average weekly expenditure of seven families, taken from among the labourers of a respectable commercial house, is only 1s 5½d per head, exclusive of rent.

From the preceding particulars, it appears highly probable, that the cost of rearing and maintaining a slave, would render his labour, under ordinary circumstances, at least as expensive as that of the free labourer. Let us next examine which is the most productive.

And here I shall again avail myself of the observations of Storch, the Russian economist: “As the slave  
 “is always labouring for another, and not for himself;  
 “as he is restricted to the bare necessities of life, and  
 “sees no prospect of bettering his condition, he loses  
 “every characteristic of the effective labourer: he becomes  
 “a machine, and often a machine very stubborn  
 “and difficult to manage. A man who is not paid in  
 “proportion to the labour he performs, will perform  
 “as little as he can. This is an acknowledged truth,  
 “confirmed by the experience of every day. Let a  
 “a free labourer work by the day, and he will be indolent;  
 “pay him by the piece, and he will often

• \* exert himself to the ruin of his health. If this ob-  
 “ servation is just with respect to the free labourer, it  
 “ is infinitely more so in relation to the slave.

“ As long as the ancient Romans cultivated their  
 “ fields with their own hands, Italy was famed for its  
 “ fertility and abundant produce ; but agriculture de-  
 “ clined as soon as it was left to the slaves : then, in-  
 “ stead of cultivating their lands, they turned them into  
 “ pastures, and the inhabitants of this delightful coun-  
 “ try, became dependent upon foreign provinces for  
 “ subsistence. The petty landholders and farmers  
 “ disappeared : and the very country that had once  
 “ presented the smiling aspect of a multitude of vil-  
 “ lages, peopled with men free and happy, became  
 “ one vast solitude, in which were scattered, here and  
 “ there, a few magnificent palaces, that formed the  
 “ most striking contrast with the miserable cabins and  
 “ subterraneous cells which contained their slaves.  
 “ These facts, related by the Roman historians, are at-  
 “ tested and explained by Pliny, Columella, and Varro.  
 “ ‘ What was the cause of these abundant har-  
 “ vests?’ says Pliny, in speaking of the early times  
 “ of the republic. ‘ It was this—that men of rank em-  
 “ ployed themselves in the culture of the fields ;  
 “ whereas now it is left to wretches loaded with fet-  
 “ ters, who carry in their countenances the shameful  
 “ evidence of their slavery.’ That free labourers are  
 “ superior to slaves, is granted even by masters them-  
 “ selves, when they have intelligence enough to per-  
 “ ceive the difference, and candour enough to acknowl-  
 “ edge it. Call to mind on this subject, the passage

“ of Columella,\* that I have quoted above, in which  
 “ he depicts the negligence and reluctance of slave-  
 “ labourers. In the same chapter, this author lays it  
 “ down as a fundamental principle, that, whatever be  
 “ the species of culture, the labour of a free man is  
 “ always preferable to that of a slave. Pliny is of the  
 “ same opinion.”

“ Observe that these testimonies in favour of free  
 “ labour, are rendered by Romans, by men who held  
 “ slaves, and who were the greatest agriculturalists of  
 “ their time.” “ In manufactures, the superiority of  
 “ the free labourer over the slave, is still more per-  
 “ ceptible than in the cultivation of lands.” The  
 “ more manufactures extend in Russia, the more this  
 “ truth continues to be felt. In 1805, M. Pantéléyef,  
 “ the agent of a cloth manufactory, in the district of  
 “ Moscow, set at liberty all his slave-labourers, the  
 “ number of whom amounted to 84. The same year  
 “ M. Milioutin did the same.”

Brougham in his Colonial Policy fully concurs in  
 these sentiments: “ It requires very little argument to  
 “ prove, that the quantity of work which may be ob-  
 “ tained from a labourer or drudge, is liable to be

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\* “ Complaints as to the negligent and fraudulent conduct of slaves,  
 are as ancient as slavery itself: read, for example, what Columella  
 says of, those of his times. ‘ Maximè vexant servi, qui boves elocant,  
 eosdemque et cætræ pecora malè pascunt, nec industriè terram vertunt,  
 longèque plus imputant seminis jacti, quam quod sererint: sed nec  
 quod terræ mandaverint, sic adjuvant ut rectè proveniat; idque cum  
 in arcam contulerunt, per trituram quotidie minuunt, vel fraude vel  
 negligentia. Nam et ipsi diripiunt, et ab aliis furibus non custodiunt.  
 Sed nec conditum cum fide rationibus inferunt.’ I have often heard  
 the same complaints from the mouths of Livonian land-holders, and  
 one may hear them constantly repeated in the West-Indies, in Hun-  
 gary, and in the interior of Russia.”

"affected as much by the injurious treatment he receives, as by the idleness in which he may be permitted to indulge. When this drudge is a slave, no motive but fear can operate on his diligence and attention. A constant inspection is therefore absolutely necessary, and a perpetual terror of the lash is the only prevention of indolence. But there are certain bounds prescribed, even to the power of the lash ; it may force the unhappy victim to move, because the line of distinction between motion and rest, action and repose, is definite ; but no punishment can compel the labourer to strenuous exertions, because there is no measure or standard of activity. A state of despair, and not of industry, is the never-failing consequence of severe chastisement ; and the constant repetition of the torture only serves to blunt the sensibility of the nerves, and disarm punishment of its terrors. The body is injured, and the mind becomes as little willing, as the limbs are able, to exert."

Hume remarks, "I shall add from the experience of our planters, that slavery is as little advantageous to the master as to the man. The fear of punishment will never draw so much labour from a slave, as the dread of being turned off, and not getting another service, will give a freeman."

Koster, in his Travels in the Brazils, observes, "The slave-trade is impolitic on the broad principle, that a man in a state of bondage, will not be so serviceable to the community as one who acts for himself, and whose whole exertions are directed to the advancement of his own fortune ; the creation of which, by

“regular means, adds to the general prosperity of the society to which he belongs. This undoubted and indisputable fact, must be still more strongly impressed on the mind of every one who has been in the habit of seeing the manner in which slaves perform their daily labour. Their indifference, and the extreme slowness of every movement, plainly point out the trifling interest which they have, in the advancement of the work. I have watched two parties labouring in the same field, one of free persons, the other of slaves, which occasionally, though very seldom, occurs. The former are singing, joking, and laughing, and are always actively turning hand and foot; whilst the latter are silent, and if they are viewed from a little distance, their movements are scarcely to be perceived.”

Hall, adverting to the pernicious effects of slavery on the southern states of North America, observes, “Experience shows, that the quantity of labour performed by slaves, is much below that of an equal number of free cultivators.”

An intelligent American gentleman, to whom queries on this subject were sent out, remarks, “I have in one of my answers, exposed the effect of slave-cultivation on the soil of our country, and on the value of real estate. I will here further observe, that independently of this, there is no fact more certainly believed by every sound mind in this country, than that slave-labour is abstractedly in itself, as it regards us, a great deal dearer than labour performed by free men; this is susceptible of clear proofs.”

It is observed by Mr. Ramsay, who had twenty

years' experience in the West Indies, "I am firmly  
 "of opinion, that a sugar plantation might be culti-  
 "vated to more advantage, and at much less expense,  
 "by labourers who were free men, than by slaves."  
 Dr. Dickson, who resided in Barbadoes as secretary  
 to the late Hon. Edward Hay, the Governor of that  
 island, observes in a letter published in his valuable  
 work on the Mitigation of Slavery, "You need not  
 "be informed, that it has been known for many ages  
 "by men of reflection, that the labour of slaves,  
 "whether bought or bred, though apparently cheaper,  
 "is really far dearer in general than that of free men."  
 "The arguments which support this conclusion, as  
 "applicable to modern Colonial slavery, were long ago  
 "assented to and exemplified by men intimately ac-  
 "quainted with and interested in the subject." In  
 another letter in the same work, he gives "a calcula-  
 "tion made under the guidance of M. Coulomb, an  
 "able mathematician and experienced engineer, who  
 "for many years conducted extensive military works  
 "both in France and the West Indies, and who has pub-  
 "lished the result of his observations." From this he  
 infers, "that field slaves do only between a third and  
 "a half of the work dispatched by reluctant French  
 "soldiers, and probably not more than a third of what  
 "those very slaves would do, if urged by their own in-  
 "terest, instead of brute force, as Mr. Steele experi-  
 "enced." In speaking of Mr. Steele's experience, in  
 another place he remarks, "He has ascertained as a  
 "fact, what was before known to the learned as a the-  
 "ory, and to practical men as a paradox, *That the*  
*"paying of slaves for their labour, does actually produce*

"a very great profit to their owners." Again, this able and experienced writer observes, "The planters do not take the right way to make human beings put forth their strength. They apply main force where they should apply moral motives, and punishments alone, where rewards should be judiciously intermixed. And yet, strange to tell, those very men affirm, and affirm truly, that a slave will do more work for himself in an afternoon, than he can be made to do for his owner in a whole day or more. Now what is the plain inference? Mr. Steele, though a stranger in the West Indies, saw it at once, and resolved to turn it to account. He saw that the negroes, like all other human beings, were to be stimulated to permanent exertion only by a sense of their own interests, in providing for their own wants and those of their offspring. He therefore tried rewards, which immediately roused the most indolent to exertion. His experiments ended in regular wages, which the industry he had excited among his whole gang, enabled him to pay. Here was a natural, efficient, and profitable reciprocity of interests. His people became contented; his mind was freed from that perpetual vexation, and that load of anxiety, which are inseparable from the vulgar system, and in little better than four years, the annual nett clearance of his property was more than tripled."

"I must additionally refer," remarks the same intelligent writer in another place, "to an excellent pamphlet, entitled Observations on Slavery, (published in 1738, and now out of print,) by my late worthy friend Dr. James Anderson; who shows that

" the labour of a West India slave costs about thrice  
 " as much as it would cost, if executed by a freeman.  
 " Taking another case, he demonstrates that the la-  
 " bour of certain colliers in Scotland, who, till our own  
 " times, were subjected to a mild kind of vassalage,  
 " regulated by law, was twice as dear as that of the  
 " freemen who wrought other coal-mines, in the same  
 " country, and thrice as dear as common day labour."

I think we might safely infer, from the preceding  
 particulars, that under ordinary circumstances the  
 labour of free men is cheaper than that of slaves ; but  
 there are many other considerations which strongly  
 confirm this conclusion.

If slave labour were cheaper than free labour, we  
 should naturally expect that, in a state where slavery  
 was allowed, land, *ceteris paribus*, would be most val-  
 uable in the districts where that system prevailed ; and  
 that in two adjoining states, in the one of which  
 slavery was allowed, and in the other prohibited, land  
 would be least valuable in the latter ; but the contrary  
 is notoriously the fact. In a late communication from  
 America on this subject, from an intelligent observer,  
 it is remarked : " The system of slave cultivation, as  
 " practised in the United States of America, has like-  
 " wise a most destructive effect on the soil of our  
 " country. The state of Maryland, though a slave  
 " state, has comparatively but few slaves in the upper  
 " or western part of it ; the land in this upper district  
 " is generally more broken by hills and stones, and is  
 " not so fertile as that on the southern and eastern  
 " parts. The latter has also the advantage of being  
 " situated upon the navigable rivers that flow into the



“Chesapeake Bay, and its produce can be conveyed to  
 “market at one-third of the average expense of that  
 “from the upper parts of the state ; yet, with all these  
 “advantages of soil, situation, and climate, the land  
 “within the slave district will not, upon a general  
 “average, sell for half as much per acre as that in the  
 “upper districts, which is cultivated principally by free  
 “men. This fact may be also further and more  
 “strikingly illustrated by the comparative value of land  
 “within the states of Virginia and Pennsylvania, the  
 “one lying on the south, and the other on the north  
 “side of Maryland ; the one a slave, the other a free  
 “state. In Virginia, land of the same natural soil and  
 “local advantages, will not sell for one-third as high a  
 “price as the same description of land will command  
 “in Pennsylvania. This single, plain, incontrovertible  
 “fact, speaks volumes upon the relative value of slave  
 “and free labour, and it is presumed renders any fur-  
 “ther illustration unnecessary.”

If slave labour were cheaper than free labour, we  
 might fairly infer that, in a state in which slavery was  
 allowed, free labour would be reduced by competition  
 to a level with the labour of slaves, and not slave labour  
 to a level with the labour of freemen ; and that in two  
 adjoining states, in the one of which slavery was allow-  
 ed, and in the other prohibited, labor would be highest,  
*cæteris paribus*, in that in which slavery was proscribed.  
 But experience proves the reverse.—Storch observes,  
 that those who hire slaves in Russia, are obliged to pay  
 more than they who hire free men, “Unless they live  
 “in a place where the competition of free labourers  
 “reduces the hire of slaves and the wages of freemen

" to a level: Both the interior of Russia, and the capitals of that empire, furnish proofs of this assertion. " In the cities, the competition of free labourers is " greater; for though wages there may be very high, " the hire of slaves is notwithstanding, less than in the " interior;" that is, that in Russia, slave labour, where slave labour is the lowest, is higher than free labour, where free labour is the highest, until reduced to the same level by competition with it. When in Norfolk, Virginia, in the winter of 1820, I was told, that many slaves gave their masters \$2, or 9s per week, for permission to work for themselves, and retain the surplus. I also found, that the common wages of slaves who are hired, were 20s 3d per week and their food, at the very time when flour was 4 dollars, or 18s, per barrel of 196lbs, and beef and mutton 3d to 4d per lb. Five days afterwards, in travelling through the rich agricultural districts of the free state of Pennsylvania, I found able-bodied white men willing to work for their food only. This, indeed, was in the winter months, and during a period of extraordinary pressure. I was told, however, that the average agricultural wages in this free state, were 5 or 6 dollars per month, and food; while, in Norfolk, at the time I allude to, they were 18 dollars per month, and food. If it should be replied, that, in the town of Norfolk, wages were likely to be much higher than in the country, I would ask, why they are not so in the principal towns of Russia?

If slave labour were cheaper than free labour, we should naturally expect to find it employed in the cultivation of those articles, in which extended competition had reduced profits to the lowest point. On the

contrary, however, we find that slave labour is gradually exterminated when brought into competition with free labour, except where legislative protection, or peculiarity of soil and climate, establish such a monopoly as to admit of an expensive system of management. The cultivation of indigo by slaves in Carolina, has been abandoned, and the price of cotton reduced one-half, since these articles have had to compete in the European markets with the productions of free labour; and, notwithstanding an additional duty on East India sugar, of 10s per cwt., and a transportation of three times the distance, the West-India planters are beyond all doubt reduced to very great distress, and declare that they shall be ruined, if sugar from the East-Indies shall be admitted on the same terms as from the West.

If slave labour were cheaper than free labour, we might reasonably infer, that, in proportion as the circumstances of the cultivators rendered economy indispensable, either from the difficulty of obtaining slaves, or other causes, the peculiar features of slavery would be more firmly established, and that every approach to freedom would be more sedulously shunned in the system of culture. But it is found by the experience of both ancient and modern times, that nothing has tended more to assimilate the condition of the slave to that of the free labourer, or actually to effect his emancipation, than the necessity imposed by circumstances, of adopting the most economical mode of cultivation.

“In ancient times,” says Brougham, “a great part of the population of the most polished states, was the

"personal property of the rest. These slaves were  
 "chiefly captives, taken directly in war, or purchased  
 "from other warlike nations who had obtained them  
 "in this way. The constant hostilities which at that  
 "time divided the people of all countries, rendered  
 "this a very fruitful source of supply. During the rise  
 "of Athens and Rome, accordingly, when many fo-  
 "reign nations were by rapid steps conquered, and  
 "when others, still unsubdued, could sell the persons  
 "of their weaker neighbours, there was never any  
 "scarcity of men in the great slave-markets. The  
 "cruelty of the treatment which those unhappy men  
 "experienced, was proportioned to the ease with which  
 "they were procured; and we have already remark-  
 "ed, how intolerable their lot was, among the very  
 "people who called every foreigner a barbarian. As  
 "war became less common, and the arts of peace  
 "were more cultivated, this supply of slaves, of course,  
 "decreased; and when the Roman Empire, tottering  
 "under its own weight, could think of nothing less  
 "than new conquests, there was an end of importing  
 "slaves. Accordingly, with the progress of real civi-  
 "lization, but still more with the diminution of wars  
 "and conquests, was introduced a milder system of  
 "domestic government, a greater humanity towards  
 "the slaves, and a more careful attention to breeding,  
 "when the stock could neither be kept up nor in-  
 "creased by other means. The laws added their  
 "sanction to this salutary change, which no laws could  
 "of themselves have wrought. The rights of slaves  
 "came to be recognized, the conduct of the master  
 "to be watched, and the practice of emancipation to  
 "be encouraged. By degrees, the slaves were incor-

“porated with their masters, and formed part of the  
 “great free population, which was rather mixed with  
 “than subdued by the Goths.”

“To the slavery of the ancients, succeeded the  
 “bondage and villanage of their Gothic conquerors.  
 “But the difference between the two was marked and  
 “important. The Greek and Roman slaves were im-  
 “ported; the Gothic slaves were the peasantry of the  
 “country, and born on the spot, unless during the wars  
 “which accompanied the first inroads of the northern  
 “tribes. Accordingly, we find no parallel between the  
 “rigour of the ancient, and of the modern slave sys-  
 “tem; and a foundation was laid in this essential  
 “difference, for a much more rapid improvement of  
 “the whole society, than took place in Greece or  
 “Rome, notwithstanding the superior refinement of the  
 “classic times. The slave first became attached to  
 “his master, not as his personal property, but as a part  
 “of his stock, and astricted to the soil, to use the lan-  
 “guage of the feudal ages. By degrees, the mutual  
 “interests of the lord and his villains, in the progress  
 “of national improvement, operated that important  
 “change in the state of manners, out of which the  
 “modern division of ranks, and the privileges of the  
 “lower orders, have arisen in the civilized quarters of  
 “the European community. First, the villain obtained  
 “the use of the land to which he had been annexed,  
 “and of the stock in which he had been comprehend-  
 “ed, on condition that a certain proportion (generally  
 “one-half) of the produce should belong to the lord  
 “of the land, and proprietor of the stock. This great  
 “change, one of the most signal of those events which

"have laid the foundation of human improvement,  
 "by degrees too slow for the observation of historians,  
 "was owing entirely to the masters discovering, how  
 "much his interest was connected with the comfort of  
 "his slaves; how necessary it was to treat well that race  
 "whose toils supported the community in ease, and  
 "whose loss could not be repaired; how much more  
 "profitable it was to divide with the vassal the fruits  
 "of his free and strenuous exertions, than to monopolize  
 "the scanty produce of his compulsory toil. As  
 "soon as the right of property, and the secure enjoyment  
 "of the fruits of labour, were extended to the  
 "vassals, the progress of improvement became constant  
 "and visible. The proportion of the fruits paid  
 "to the lord, was diminished according to an indefinite  
 "standard; the peasant, having been permitted to acquire  
 "property, provided his own stock, and obtained  
 "the power of changing his residence, and commuting  
 "the nature of his service. By degrees, the rent came  
 "to be paid in money, according to the number of  
 "competitors for a farm; and they who could not farm  
 "land themselves, sold their labour to others for a certain  
 "price, or maintenance. Lastly, the legislature  
 "secured the lease of the farmer with the same certainty  
 "with which it secured the property of the landlord,  
 "and recognized the one as well as the other for  
 "useful and independent subjects."

"A similar progress will most probably be the result  
 "of that abolition, the supposition of which we are indulging—  
 "the abolition of the slave-trade. That this  
 "idea is not chimerical, the consideration of a few  
 "facts, very little known in the history of America,  
 "may convince us."

" The peculiar circumstances in the situation of the  
 " Spanish and Portuguese colonies of South America;  
 " have already partially operated some of those happy  
 " effects which we may expect from the abolition of  
 " the slave-trade. The high price of the negroes in  
 " the Spanish settlements, partly from absurd regula-  
 " tions of trade, partly from the deficiency of the  
 " Spaniards in the practice of commerce and naval  
 " affairs, causes that want of hands, which would pre-  
 " vail in its full extent, were the African trade stopt."  
 " From these circumstances, and partly, no doubt, from  
 " the peculiarly indolent character of the colonists in  
 " those parts, there has arisen a much better system  
 " of treatment than any other European colonies can  
 " boast of." " Other views of interest have conspired  
 " to confirm and extend this system of mildness and  
 " equity towards the slaves ; and the legislature has  
 " not failed, by every prudent interference, to assist  
 " the inferior race in the acquisition of rights and privi-  
 " leges."

" Thus we meet with many very singular analogies,  
 " between the history of the negroes in South America,  
 " and that of the villains or bondsmen of Europe, in  
 " the earlier feudal times. All the gold and jewels in  
 " Brazil have, for many years, been collected, ac-  
 " cording to the same plan that the feudal lords  
 " adopted for the purpose of quickening the industry of  
 " their vassals. The master supplies the slave daily  
 " with a certain quantity of provisions and tools, and  
 " the slave is obliged to return a certain quantity of  
 " gold or jewels, according to the nature of the  
 " ground. Every thing that remains over this ration,

"the negro keeps himself, were the balance to be mil-  
 "lions. The gold-mines of Popayan and Choco, in  
 "Spanish America, are wrought in the very same way.  
 "The finest pearl fisheries in South America, those of  
 "Panama for example, are in the hands of negro ten-  
 "ants, as it were. These are bound to give a certain  
 "number of pearls every week. The negroes in the  
 "towns are allowed to hire themselves out to services  
 "of different kinds, on condition of returning to their  
 "masters a certain portion of their wages ; the rest they  
 "may spend or hoard up for their own use."

"After a slave has, in any of these various ways, ac-  
 "quired property, he endeavours to purchase his free-  
 "dom. If the master is exorbitant in his demands,  
 "he may apply to a magistrate, who appoints sworn  
 "appraisers, to fix the price at which the slave shall be  
 "allowed to buy his freedom. Even during his slave-  
 "ry, the behaviour of the master towards him is strict-  
 "ly watched ; he may complain to the magistrate, and  
 "obtain redress, which generally consists in a decree,  
 "obliging the master to sell him at a certain rate. The  
 "consequences of all these laws and customs are ex-  
 "tremely beneficial to the Spanish and Portuguese  
 "power in America. While the slaves are faithful and  
 "laborious, the free negroes are numerous, and in  
 "general much more quiet, useful, and industrious,  
 "than in the other colonies. Most of the artificers are  
 "of this class ; and some of the best troops in the  
 "New World are composed entirely of negroes, who,  
 "by their own labour and frugality, have acquired  
 "their liberty."

"It is hardly necessary to remark the striking ana-



"logy between the state of the Spanish and Portu-  
 "guese negroes, and that of the European bondsmen;  
 "at a certain period of their progress towards liberty.  
 "We find the same gentleness of treatment, the same  
 "protection from the laws, the same acknowledgments  
 "of rights, the same power of acquiring property,  
 "granted to the American slave, which prepared the  
 "complete emancipation of the European vassal. In  
 "some particulars we observe another step of the same  
 "progress ; for in many parts the negroes are precisely  
 "in the situation of the *coloni partiarrii*, or metayers of  
 "the feudal times. In one respect the negro is even  
 "in a more favourable situation : his *reddendo*, (if I may  
 "use the expression,) is fixed and definite ; all the  
 "overplus of his industry belongs to himself. The  
 "metayer was bound to divide every gain with his lord.  
 "The former, then, has a much stronger incentive to  
 "industry than the latter had. As this difference, how-  
 "ever, arises, not from the progress of society, but from  
 "the nature of the returns themselves, easily conceal-  
 "ed, and with difficulty procured ; so, in some other  
 "respects, the negro is not in so favourable circum-  
 "stances. But the great steps of the process of im-  
 "provement are materially the same in both cases.  
 "Both have in common the great points of a bargain  
 "between the master and the slave ; privileges pos-  
 "sessed by the slave independent of, nay in opposition  
 "to, his master ; the rights of property enjoyed by the  
 "slave, and the power of purchasing his freedom at a  
 "just price. This resemblance, in circumstances so  
 "important, may fairly be expected to render the pro-  
 "gress of the two orders also similar. In the negro,

“as in the feudal system, we may look for the consequences of those great improvements in voluntary industry, more productive labour, and the mitigation and final abolition of slavery, when the slave shall have been gradually prepared to become a free subject.

“Some of the good effects that have flowed from the national character, and peculiar circumstances of the Spanish and Portuguese, have been produced also in Dutch America, by that great competition of capitals, and those complicated difficulties, which lay the Dutch colonists under the necessity of attending to the smallest savings. If from this source, combined with the facility of importation, has arisen a cruelty unknown in other colonies, it may be doubted whether a compensation for the evil is not afforded by another effect of the same circumstances:—the general introduction of task work, which the keensighted spirit of a necessary avarice has taught the planter of Dutch Guiana to view as the most profitable manner of working his slaves. Nothing, indeed, can conduce more immediately to the excitement of industry, than the introduction of task-work. It seems the natural and easy transition from labour to industry: it forms in the mind of the slave, those habits which are necessary for the character of the free-man: it thus prepares him for enjoying, by a gradual change, those rights and privileges which belong to freedom.”

Of that modification of slavery, under which the slave pays a tax or tribute to his master for permission to work on his own account, and to which such im-

portant effects are ascribed in the preceding extracts, Storch observes, "This modification of slavery, has  
 "been permitted by different nations; but I doubt  
 "whether it ever existed any where to that extent in  
 "which it is found in Russia. It is there one of the most  
 "effectual means of softening the direful consequences  
 "of slavery: and if its abolition should ever be seri-  
 "ously intended, this system would present the means,  
 "the most simple, and the least subject to inconveni-  
 "encies." Now it would be difficult to find a strong-  
 er proof of the paralyzing influence of slavery on  
 human exertion, than the beneficial results which have  
 followed the substitution in its place of a system so  
 oppressive as even this mitigated form of bondage is  
 represented to be by intelligent travellers. Mr. Heber  
 remarks, "The peasants belonging to the nobles in  
 "Russia, have their abrock raised by their means of  
 "getting money. It then becomes not a rent of land,  
 "but a downright tax upon their industry. Each male  
 "peasant is obliged by law to labour three days in  
 "each week for his proprietor. If the proprietor choos-  
 "es to employ him the other days, he may; as, for  
 "instance, in a manufactory, but he then finds him in  
 "food and clothing. If a slave exercises any trade  
 "which brings him in more money than agricultural  
 "labour, he pays a higher abrock. The peasants em-  
 "ployed as drivers at the post-houses, pay an abrock  
 "out of the drink-money they receive for being  
 "permitted to drive; as otherwise, the master might  
 "employ them in other less profitable labour, on his  
 "own account. Sometimes they pay an abrock for  
 "permission to beg." "In despite," says Dr. Clarke,

“of all the pretended regulations made in favour of  
 “the peasant, the tax he is called upon to pay on the  
 “labour he is compelled to bestow, depends wholly  
 “on the caprice of his tyrant.”

Task-work, another important although earlier step in the progress from slavery to freedom, than a participation of earnings with a master, and another instance of the substitution of a cheaper for a more expensive system of cultivation, I found to be almost universal in the Atlantic States of America, where tobacco, cotton, and rice, are the staple articles of production; but I never heard of an instance of it in the sugar plantations of Louisiana, where great profits render economy less necessary.

If slave labour were cheaper than free-labour, we might confidently presume that estates would be rendered less productive than the emancipation of the slaves which cultivated them; but the presumption is contradicted by experience. “A few Polish nobles,  
 “(observes Coxe in his travels in Poland,) of benevo-  
 “lent hearts, and enlightened understandings, have  
 “acted upon different principles, and have ventured  
 “upon the expedient of giving liberty to their vassals.  
 “The event has shown this to be no less judicious than  
 “humane, no less friendly to their own interests than  
 “to the happiness of the peasants; for it appears that  
 “in the districts in which the new arrangement has  
 “been introduced, the population of their villages has  
 “been considerably increased, and the revenues of  
 “their estates augmented in a triple proportion. The  
 “first noble who granted freedom to his peasants, was  
 “Zamoiski, formerly great chancellor, who, in 1761,

“enfranchised six villages, in the palatinate of Maso-  
 “rin. In 1777, the receipts of this particular district  
 “were nearly triple ; and Zamoiski, pleased with the  
 “thriving state of the six villages, has enfranchised the  
 “peasants on all his estates.

“The example of Zamoiski has been followed by  
 “Chreptowitz, Vice-Chancellor of Lithuania, and the  
 “Abbe Bryzolowski, with similar success. Prince  
 “Stanislaus, the king of Poland, has warmly patroni-  
 “zed the plan of giving liberty to the peasants. He  
 “has enfranchised four villages not far from Warsaw,  
 “in which he has not only emancipated the peasants  
 “from their slavery, but even condescends to direct  
 “their affairs. He explained to me in the most satis-  
 “factory manner, that the grant of freedom was no  
 “less advantageous to the lord than to the peasant,  
 “provided the former is willing to superintend their  
 “conduct for a few years, and to put them in the way  
 “of acting for themselves. He intends giving the  
 “public a particular account of his arrangements,  
 “and will show how much he has increased the value  
 “of his estate, as well as the happiness of his peasants.”

If, then, it has appeared that we should be naturally  
 led to infer, from the very constitution of human nature,  
 that slave labour is more expensive than the labour of  
 freemen ; if it has appeared that such has been the  
 opinion of the most eminent philosophers and enlight-  
 ened travellers in different ages and countries ; if it has  
 appeared that in a state where slavery is allowed, land  
 is the most valuable in those districts where the slave  
 system prevails the least, notwithstanding great disad-  
 vantages of locality ; and that in adjoining states, with

precisely the same soil and climate, in the one of which slavery is allowed, and in the other prohibited, land is the most valuable in that state in which it is proscribed; if it has appeared that slave labour has never been able to maintain its ground in competition with free labour, except where monopoly has secured high profits, or prohibitory duties afforded artificial support; if it has appeared that, in every quarter of the globe, in proportion as the circumstances of the planter rendered attention to economy more indispensable, the harsher features of the slave-system have disappeared, and the condition of the slave has been gradually assimilated to that of the free labourer; and if it has appeared that the mitigation of slavery has been found by experience to substitute the alacrity of voluntary labour, for the reluctance of compulsory toil; and that emancipation has rendered the estates on which it has taken place, greatly and rapidly more productive—I need not, I think, adduce additional proofs of the truth of the general position, that slave labour is more expensive than the labour of freemen.



And here perhaps I might safely leave the question; yet since your arguments, although of a general nature, and not restricted in their application to any peculiarity of circumstances or situation, seem to be derived from a somewhat partial view of the state of things in the West Indies, I shall proceed to examine whether they afford any presumption that those islands present an exception to the general rule.

The comparison which you have made between the price of slave and free labour in the Antilles, appears to me by no means to warrant the conclusion you have drawn from it. Where the proportion of free labourers is extremely small, and labour is rendered degrading, or at least disreputable, by being confined principally to slaves, it is natural that the wages of free labour should be high ; and the question is not, whether at a given time and place, free or slave labour is the highest, but whether both are not higher than labour would be if all the community were free, and the principle of population were allowed to produce its natural effect on the price of labour, by maintaining the supply and competition of free labourers.

The other argument which you adduce, appears to me equally inconclusive. You observe, that, “ the obstinacy with which the planters defend slavery, is of itself sufficient to prove that it is advantageous to them.”

And does man, indeed, then, always act with an enlightened view to self-interest? Is he uniformly vigilant to observe, and prompt to pursue his real good, however remote, and requiring whatever sacrifices of present ease and gratification? Does prejudice or passion never blind or mislead him? nor habit render him slow to follow the dictates of his better judgment? The conversion of the slaves in the Colonies into free labourers, must be a very gradual work, demanding much patience and assiduity,—involving, possibly, some present risk, and requiring, it may be, for its complete success, the consentaneous efforts of the planters. And is such a task likely to be undertaken spontane-

ously, by the body of West India proprietors whose concerns are managed by hired overseers? who consider their capital as invested, if not in a lottery, at least rather in a mercantile speculation, from which it is speedily to be disengaged, than in landed property, which is to descend, with all its improvements, to their children's children? Is not the whole history of Colonial cultivation; is not the long and violent opposition of the planters to the abolition of the slave-trade; is not the reluctance they evinced to breed, instead of purchase their slaves, when the latter plan was so notoriously the most expensive; is not their unwillingness to adopt the enlightened and profitable suggestions of their able counsellor and experienced associate, "The Professional Planter;" are not all these irrefragable proofs, that the practice of a planter, like that of other men, may be at variance with his interest especially if in unison with his prejudices and his inclinations? If you should require additional evidence, I refer you to Brougham's Colonial Policy, where the fact is illustrated and explained, in language somewhat less courteous, indeed, than I am willing to adopt, but with the usual force and ability of that powerful writer.

Ganilh expresses his surprise, that an author so intelligent as yourself, and so well acquainted with the progress of society in Europe, should maintain the general position, that slave labour is cheaper than the labour of freemen; but he insinuates some doubt, whether the position may not be true when applied to the Colonies. He gives no reasons, however for this idea, (for he scarcely offers it as an opinion,) which do



not apply with the same force and propriety to the European system ; and after a careful examination of his argument, I can really discern as little connection between the principles he lays down, and the inference he seems disposed to deduce from them, as between the solemn and repeated declarations of France, that she has, *bona fide*, abolished the slave-trade, and her extension of this traffic, in the eyes of Europe, to the very utmost limits of which her capital will admit.

“ He observes, “ As soon, therefore, as education “ has formed man for a particular mode of living, it is “ the height of imprudence to impose upon a free- “ man, all at once, the ideas, the feelings, and the in- “ clinations of a slave ; or, upon a slave, the ideas, “ feelings, and inclinations of a freeman. In this res- “ pect, *although it appears to us evident, that the labour “ of a freeman is more profitable than that of the slave,* “ perhaps it is equally true, of the colonial system, “ as it now exists, that the labour of the slave is more pro- “ fitable than that of the freeman.” Now this argument against the abolition of slavery in the West Indies, ap- plies equally to the abolition of slavery every where ; or rather, it is applicable only to *sudden* emancipation any where. “ By educating a man as a slave, “ you unfit him for freedom.” Educate him then, as a freeman, and you unfit him for slavery. If the present generation of the West India slaves, are so tainted with the poison of slavery, that their moral constitutions cannot be regenerated, guard the next generation from the malignant influence of this vicious system, and you supply the islands with more productive labourers, agreeably to Ganilh’s own admission.

If he had founded his exception of the Colonies from the operation of the general principle that the labour of free men is cheaper than that of slaves, on some radical distinction between the European and the African race, or between European and Colonial bondage, his argument would have been intelligible at least, if not conclusive. But he asserts, and I think most justly, "that the nature of man—white, yellow, "or black, is every where the same; that the passions "exercise the same empire over each colour, and that "all equally obey the influence of moral and physical "causes;" and with respect to any difference between European and Colonial bondage, he has not even alluded to the subject.

I admit, however, that some striking distinctions exist between them; distinctions so little creditable either to your country or my own, that I rejoice that my subject does not compel me to insist upon them. The argument I am pursuing, leads me to dwell less on those points in which the two systems differ, than on those in which they agree; and I trust it will appear from their coincidence in the few particulars in which I shall institute a comparison between them, that the principles from which slavery derives its malignant influence on human character, are common to both, and that the happy results which have followed its abolition in the one case, may reasonably be anticipated from it in the other.

If in the West Indies and America, the wealth of a planter is estimated, not by the number of acres which he possesses, but by the number of his slaves, so it is in Europe. "Peasants belonging to individuals in Rus-

"sia," says Coxe, "are the private property of the landholder, as much as implements of agriculture, or herds of cattle, and the value of an estate is estimated by the number of boors, and not by the number of acres." "The peasants of Poland," observes the same writer, "as in all feudal governments, are serfs or slaves; and the value of an estate is not estimated so much from its extent, as from the number of its peasants, who are transferred from one master to another, like so many herds of cattle."

If in the West Indies and America, the slave can possess no property, except at the will of the master, who may choose to appropriate it, neither can he in many parts of Europe. "A man," says Storch, "who belongs to another man, cannot possess any thing of his own. All that he produces, and all that he acquires, is produced and acquired for his master." "With regard to any capital," Coxe observes, "which the Russian peasants may have acquired by their industry, it may be seized, and there can be no redress, as according to the old feudal law, which still exists, a slave cannot institute a process against his master. Hence it occasionally happens, that several peasants who have gained a large capital, cannot purchase their liberty for any sum, because they are subject, as long as they continue slaves, to be pillaged by their masters." "If the slave," says Dr. Clarke, "have sufficient ingenuity to gain money without his knowledge, it becomes a dangerous possession, and when discovered, it falls instantly into the hands of his lord." "The Russian boors," Tooke remarks, "have no civil liberty; their children belong not to

“them, but to their manorial lord, on whose will they depend; they also, with their children, may be alienated, sold, and exchanged. They possess no immoveable property; but they themselves are treated sometimes as the moveable, sometimes as the immoveable property of another.”

If in the West Indies and America, the power of the master has too frequently, in practice at least, extended to the life of the slave, such has often been the case in Europe. In the State of Mississippi, in 1820, a young planter was pointed out to me who had shot a runaway slave the preceding year, without the smallest notice being taken of it; and a similar circumstance had occurred on a neighbouring plantation about the same time. “In the west of Europe,” says Storch, “under the feudal system, the condition of the slaves was much harder than it is in reality in Russia, as the master had the power of life and death over his slaves.” Coxe, in his travels in Poland, observes, “Peasants belonging to individuals, are at the absolute disposal of the master, and have scarcely any positive security, either for their properties or their lives. Until 1768, the statutes of Poland only exacted a fine from a lord who had killed his slave; but in that year a decree was passed by which the murder of a peasant was made a capital crime; yet, as the law in question requires such an accumulation of evidence as is seldom to be obtained, it has more the appearance of protection than the reality.” The same traveller observes, in his travels in Russia, “The lord, according to the ancient laws, had no power over the lives of the peasants, for if a slave was beat by order

“of his master, and died within the space of three days, “the latter was guilty of murder, unless other reasons “could be assigned for his demise. But was not this “almost a mockery of justice? For surely a man “might be terribly chastised without suffering death in “three days, and if his vassal died within that space, “and his master was a man of consequence, who was “to bring him to justice?”

If in the West-Indies and America, marriage may be rendered impracticable, or its sacred ties torn asunder at the caprice of a master, so they may in Europe. “If the slave marries,” says Storch, “it is “because his master either wishes it, or allows it; if he “becomes a father, his children are born slaves, like “himself: his authority over his wife and children is “subordinate to that which his master exercises “over them: he is first a slave, and then a man.” “A peasant in the village of Celo Molody, near “Moscow,” observes Dr. Clarke, “who had been “fortunate enough to scrape together a little wealth, “wished to marry his daughter to a tradesman of “the city, and offered fifteen thousand roubles for “her freedom—a most unusual price, and a much “greater sum than persons of his class, situated as “he was, will be found to possess. The tyrant took “the ransom, and then told the father that both “the girl and the money belonged to him; and there- “fore, she must continue among the number of his “slaves.”

If the negroes, (often active and energetic in their own country), are accused of indolence and apathy in the colonies, so are the lively Russians themselves

when benumbed by slavery. "Other nations," says Dr. Clarke, "speak of Russian indolence, which is remarkable, as no people are naturally more lively, or more disposed to employment. We may perhaps assign a cause for their inactivity. It is necessary. Can there exist excitement to labour, when it is certain that a tyrant will bereave industry of all its reward. The only property a Russian nobleman allows his slave to possess, is the food he cannot or will not eat himself. The bark of trees, chaff, and other refuse, grass, and fish oil." "With regard," says Mr. Heber, "to the idleness of the lower classes in Russia, of which we have heard great complaints, it appears that when they have an interest in exertion, they by no means want industry. Great proprietors, who never raise their abrock, such as Count Shere-motoff, have very rich and prosperous peasants." Again, "We observed a striking difference between the peasants of the crown, and those of individuals. The former are almost all in comparatively easy circumstances. Their abrock or rent is fixed, and as they are sure it will never be raised, they are more industrious."

If the miseries of slavery in the Colonies, occasionally exasperate the slaves to desperation, and impel them to atrocities, which diffuse general apprehension and alarm, the same thing occurs in Russia. "In such instances," observes Dr. Clarke, "the peasants take the law into their own hands, and assassinate their lords. To prevent this, the latter live in cities, remote from their own people, and altogether unmindful of all that concerns their slaves, except the tribute

they are to pay." Mr. Birkbeck relates the following anecdote of a planter, whom he met in a tavern in Virginia, and Dr. Clarke informs us that Russia can supply many parallel cases. "One gentleman," says Mr. Birkbeck, "in a poor state of health, dared not encounter the rain, but was wretched at the thoughts of his family's being for one night without his protection, from his own slaves. He was suffering under the effects of a poisonous potion, administered by a negro who was his personal servant." Dr. Clarke observes, "Many of the Russian nobles dare not venture near their own villages, through fear of the vengeance they have merited by their crimes." It has occurred to myself, while in the State of Mississippi, to hear a well authenticated instance of a planter, who was compelling his slaves to work during a great part of the night, having been surprised asleep on the trunk of a tree, on which he had sat down to inspect them, shot with his own rifle, and then burnt in the ashes of their midnight fires ; and Mr. Heber remarks when in Russia, "The brother of a lady of our acquaintance, who had a great distillery, disappeared suddenly, and was pretty easily guessed to have been thrown into a boiling copper by his slaves." He adds, "domestic servants (slaves) sometimes revenge themselves in a terrible manner."

If travellers in America find the prisons in the slave-states filled with slaves, (as I did almost universally,) Mr. Heber remarks, "the prisons of Moscow and Kastroma were chiefly filled with runaway slaves, who were for the most part in irons."

If in passing from a free into a slave-state in Amer-

ica, the change is instantly visible, even to the most careless eye, and nature herself seems to droop and sicken under the withering influence of slavery; the case is precisely the same in Europe. "The houses," says Hall, in his travels, "in America, universally shaded with large verandahs, seem to give notice of a southern climate: the huts around them, open to the elements, tell a less pleasing tale: they inform the traveller he has entered on a land of freemen and slaves, and he beholds the scene marred with wretched dwellings, and wretched faces! And if the miserable condition of the negro leave him mind for reflection, he might laugh in his chains, to see how slavery has stricken the land with ugliness. The smiling villages and happy population of the eastern and central states, give place to the splendid equipages of a few planters, and a wretched negro population, crawling among filthy hovels. For villages, after crossing the Susquehanna, there are scarcely any: there are only plantations—the very name speaks volumes!" My own personal observation enables me to subscribe to the fidelity of this picture, and from a recent communication which now lies before me from America, in reply to some inquiries transmitted to that country on the subject, I extract the following remarks:—"It is believed that no country can furnish a more full and clear opportunity, than the United States of America do at this time, of testing the effect of domestic slavery upon the industry and prosperity of a nation, and the relative value or profit of free and slave labour. The States of Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont, New-York,



" New-Jersey, and Pennsylvania, are now cultivated  
 " almost entirely by freemen. These States lie under  
 " a more rigorous climate, and possess a less fertile  
 " soil than the southern states, yet the prosperous situ-  
 " ation of the country, the general comfort of the in-  
 " habitants, and the improved condition of agriculture  
 " in those free states, compared with the slave states,  
 " are so obvious as to strike the traveller immediately,  
 " as he passes from the one district to the other. In  
 " the one we find the whole country divided into small  
 " farms of from 100 to 500 acres of land ; on each of  
 " these tracts is generally erected a comfortable dwell-  
 " ing-house, with the necessary out-buildings, which  
 " are surrounded by well cultivated fields, in good or-  
 " der. In this district, the farmers, with but few ex-  
 " ceptions, annually realize a small profit, by which  
 " they are enabled, as their children attain to manhood,  
 " to make respectable provision for their establishment  
 " in business. In the other, we meet here and there,  
 " thinly scattered over a wretchedly cultivated district  
 " of country, a mansion-house, commonly in bad repair,  
 " surrounded by a number of dirty beggarly huts,  
 " crowded with ragged negroes and mulattoes, and the  
 " whole bearing the strongest marks of oppression and  
 " suffering, in which the half-starved neglected cattle,  
 " and other domestic animals, evidently participate.  
 " In other words, in those districts where the system of  
 " slavery is in full operation, the population is compo-  
 " sed of the two extreme conditions of society, viz :  
 " the rich and the poor : and we meet with scarcely  
 " any of that middling class which in all countries con-  
 " stitutes its most valuable members, and is most ef-

“ficient strength.” It is observed of a slave district in Russia, in the “Memoirs of the Court of St. Petersburg,” “A few cities enjoy the pleasures of life, and exhibit palaces, because whole provinces lie desolate, or contain only wretched hovels, in which you would expect to find bears rather than men.” Coxe observes, in his journey from Stockholm to Carlsrona, “After having witnessed the slavery of the peasants in Russia and Poland, it was a pleasing satisfaction to find myself again among freemen, in a kingdom where there is a more equal division of property, where there is no vassalage; where the lowest order enjoy a security of person and property, and where the advantages resulting from this right, are visible to the commonest observer. Norway is blessed with a particular code called the ‘Norway Law.’ “By this law—the palladium of Norway, the peasants are free; a few only excepted on certain noble estates near Frederickstadt. The benefits of the Norway code are so visible, as to the general effect on the happiness, and on the appearance of the peasants, that a traveller must be blind who does not instantly perceive the difference between the free peasants of Norway, and the enslaved vassals of Denmark, though both living under the same government.”

If in the West Indies and America, you are often surprised and grieved by the strange assertion that the condition of the slaves is as good as that of the labourers in England, as if mere animal sustenance were all that is necessary for the happiness of a rational and immortal being, the same proof is often afforded in Russia, of the degree in which familiarity with slavery

may degrade man in the estimate of his fellow man, and render a feudal lord insensible to all that constitutes the essence of freedom. "There is," said one of the Russian princes to Dr. Clarke, addressing himself to him with an air of triumph, "more of the *reality* of slavery in England than in Russia."

And if in the West Indies, there is a general prejudice against emancipation, and the idea of imparting to slaves the privileges of freedom is regarded as theoretical and visionary; similar errors and prejudices have prevailed, and perhaps still prevail in many parts of Europe. "The generality of the Polish nobles," observes Coxe, "are not inclined either to establish or give efficacy to any regulations in favour of the peasants, whom they consider as not entitled to the common rights of humanity?" "I was much surprised to find," says the same author, "upon inquiry, that no noble in Russia had franchised his vassals; but I may venture to predict that the time is not far distant, although an almost general prejudice seems to prevail, with respect to the incapacity of the peasants for receiving their liberty. And this perhaps may be true in the literal sense, as many of them, unless properly instructed, would scarcely be enabled to derive a solid advantage from their freedom, which might be considered by some as an exemption from labour, and a permission for licentiousness. *A century ago, perhaps no one in Russia would have ventured to debate the question, whether peasants ought to be free.*"

And yet emancipation has proceeded rapidly in Europe, with what brilliant success let Ganilh himself in-

form us : "The emancipation of the people of Europe,  
 " has been followed by the clearing and culture of the  
 " soil ; by the conversion of cabins into cottages, of  
 " hamlets into villages, of villages into towns, and of  
 " towns into cities ; by the encouragement of industry  
 " and trade ; by public order and social strength. The  
 " nations which have made the most shining figure, are  
 " the very ones which have first substituted the labour  
 " of the freeman for that of the slave ; and other na-  
 " tions have not been able to raise themselves to  
 " the same height of prosperity, but by imitating  
 " their example ; would the era of financial and poli-  
 " tical improvement in modern Europe may be dated  
 " from the abolition of actual and personal servitude."

And why may not the same glorious consequences follow the abolition of slavery in the West ? is it in Europe only that the mind can awaken from the torpor of slavery to life and intelligence ? What shall we say, then, to the abolition of slavery, under British auspices, in Ceylon, in Java, in Sumatra, and in St. Helena ? Or is it the African alone who imbibes a poison from the bitter cup which no antidote can cure, but which flows in the veins, and attaints the blood of his latest posterity ? To you, Sir, it would be most unjust to impute such an opinion ; but if it should be entertained by any of your countrymen, I would refer them to the experiment lately made in Columbia, where a great body of slaves have been emancipated, who are said " to have conducted themselves with a degree of  
 " industry, sobriety, and order, highly creditable to  
 " them." I would refer them to the instance of the American slaves who joined the British standard in the

last war, and who are now settled in Trinidad ; where, under the protection of Sir Ralph Woodford, the Governor, "they are earning their subsistence," Mr. Wilberforce informs us, "with so much industry and good conduct, as to have put to silence all the calumnies which were first urged against the measure." I would refer them to the testimony of a traveller, whose authority they will not dispute, the enterprising and philosophical Humboldt : "In all these excursions," he observes, "we were agreeably surprised, not only at the progress of agriculture, but the increase of a free, laborious population, accustomed to toil, and too poor to rely on the assistance of slaves. White and black farmers had every where separate establishments." "I love to dwell on these details of Colonial industry, because they prove to the inhabitants of Europe, what to the enlightened inhabitants of the Colonies has long ceased to be doubtful, that the Continent of Spanish America can produce Sugar and Indigo by free hands, and that the unhappy slaves are capable of becoming peasants, farmers, and landholders." I would refer them to the interesting and flourishing colony of Sierra Leone, that morning star of Africa, which beams so brightly on her sable brow. Or, lastly, I would refer them to a dark page in your Colonial history, where the refutation of their opinion is written in characters of fire.

Why, then, I would ask again, may not the same glorious consequences which followed the abolition of slavery in Europe, follow its abolition in the West ? "The abolition of the slave-trade," says Brougham, "*assisted by subordinate arrangements, similar to those*

“*adopted in the ancient states, in the feudal kingdoms,*  
 “*and in the American Colonies,* will most undoubtedly  
 “alter the whole face of things in the new world. The  
 “negroes, placed in almost the same circumstances  
 “with the bondmen of ancient Europe and the slaves  
 “of the classic times, will begin the same career of  
 “improvement. The society of the West-Indies will  
 “no longer be that anomalous, defective, and disgust-  
 “ing monster of political existence, which we have  
 “so often been forced to contemplate in the course of  
 “this inquiry. The foundation of rapid improvement  
 “will be securely laid, both for the whites, the negroes,  
 “and the mixed race. A strong and compact political  
 “structure will arise, under the influence of a mild,  
 “civilized, and enlightened system. The vast conti-  
 “nent of Africa will keep pace with the quick im-  
 “provement of the world which she has peopled; and  
 “in those regions where, as yet, only the war-hoop, the  
 “lash, and the cries of misery, have divided with the  
 “beasts the silence of the desert, our children, and the  
 “children of our slaves, may enjoy the delightful  
 “prospect of that benign and splendid reign, which is  
 “exercised by the arts, the sciences, and the virtues,  
 “of modern Europe.”

Such, Sir, is the animating picture of the future for-  
 tunes of the negro race. It is drawn, not by a philan-  
 thropist in the shades of retirement, but by a Politician  
 who had meditated deeply on Colonial Policy, who  
 brought to the consideration of this difficult topic, a  
 mind second to few in capacity and vigour, and en-  
 riched with the most valuable information, commer-  
 cial, political, and moral, on all topics connected with

the interests of the Colonies. It is a sketch from the hand of a master, but of a master more eminent for the distinctness of his conceptions, and the bold lineaments of his prominent figures, than for the embellishments of a luxuriant fancy, or the warm colouring of romantic or impassioned feeling.

Nor was the expectation that the abolition of slavery, with all its beneficial results, would follow the abolition of the slave-trade, confined to Mr. Brougham. "Not I only," says Mr. Wilberforce, but all the chief advocates of the Abolition of the Slave-trade,—Mr. Pitt, Mr. Fox, Lord Grenville, Lord Grey, and every other,—scrupled not to declare, from the very first, "that their object was, by ameliorating regulations, and more especially by stopping that influx of uneducated savages, which furnished an excuse for continuing a harsh system of management, and prevented masters from looking to their actual stock of slaves for keeping up their number, to be surely though slowly advancing towards the period when these unhappy beings might exchange their degraded state of slavery for that of a free and industrious peasantry."

Mr. William Smith observes, "That he scrupled not to avow and to maintain, nor had he ever, at any period of the Slave-trade controversy, scrupled to avow and to maintain, that the ultimate object of every friend of justice and humanity in this country, must and ought to be, eventually to extend freedom to every individual within the dominions of Great Britain; that this freedom belonged to them of right; and that to withhold it beyond the necessity of the case, and especially to withhold it systematically, and in inten-

"tion, *for ever*, was the very grossest injustice. He  
 "admitted, indeed, that *immediate* emancipation might  
 "be an injury, and not a benefit, to the slaves them-  
 "selves: a period of preparation seemed to be neces-  
 "sary. The ground of this delay, however, was not  
 "the intermediate advantage to be derived from their  
 "labour, but a conviction of its expediency as it ~~res-~~  
 "pected themselves. We had to compensate to these  
 "wretched beings for ages of injustice; we were  
 "bound by the strongest obligations to train up these  
 "subjects of our past injustice and tyranny, for an equal  
 "participation with ourselves in the blessings of liberty,  
 "and the protection of law; and by these considera-  
 "tions ought our measures to be strictly and conscien-  
 "tiously regulated. It was only while proceeding in  
 "such a course of action, adopted on principle and  
 "steadily pursued, that we could be justified in the re-  
 "tention of the negroes in slavery for a single hour;  
 "and he trusted that the eyes of all men, both here  
 "and in the colonies, would be open to this view of  
 "the subject, as their clear and indispensable duty."

And why have so many years elapsed without any  
 systematic approach to that happy change in the struc-  
 ture of Colonial society, which was so generally ex-  
 pected to follow the abolition of the slave trade? Is  
 it not because the circumstances of the planters have  
 never yet been such as to compel them to introduce  
 those "subordinate arrangements," those "ameliora-  
 ting regulations," adopted by the ancient states, and  
 feudal kingdoms of Europe? But the time is probably  
 at hand, when necessity will force them to adopt the  
 most economical mode of culture, however averse to



change and innovation. The nation will not long consent to support a wasteful system of cultivation, at the expense of great national interests, and of an opening commerce with 60 to 100 millions of our fellow-subjects; and the slave labour of the West must fall, when brought into competition with the free labour of the East.

Deeply impressed with this conviction, I dwell with peculiar pleasure on every view of this important subject, which illustrates the connexion between the interest of the master and the slave. And having had a near view of slavery in the United States of America, having seen the dark aspect which it assumes, and the apprehensions which it diffuses under a government pre-eminently free, in the bosom of an enlightened people, and in the sunshine of benign and liberal institutions, I am persuaded that such a system cannot exist long, in daily contrast with the enlightened policy of the new republics of the West, and under the brighter light which the diffusion of the gospel is shedding over the globe. I rejoice, therefore, in the conclusion, that the same measures,—the mitigation and gradual abolition of slavery,—which are best calculated to avert a crisis which it is impossible to contemplate without dismay, are precisely those which, it would appear from the preceding pages, are most adapted to promote the immediate interest of the planters, by diminishing the expenses, and increasing the produce of their estates.

That the removal of the monopoly which they at present enjoy, will enhance the distress of the West-India planters, it is impossible to doubt; and the dis-

tress of so numerous a body, comprising some of the most enlightened and estimable members of the community, deserves a serious and dispassionate consideration. That sympathy is unnatural, which is excited only for sufferers at a distance, and that sensibility defective, which can feel only for the slave. But it is the part of an enlightened Legislator, when endeavouring to relieve one class of the community, to guard against the injustice of transferring the burden to another; and to require from those who solicit his interference, not only that they make out a strong case of distress, but that they prove that they are vigorously pursuing every means within their own power, to extricate themselves from the difficulties of their situation.

It is on these grounds, and not on any vague idea, that Parliament is pledged to support them, that the West Indians should rest their claims. Even with respect to the absolute prohibition of a trade which Parliament had encouraged, Mr. Pitt repelled the idea of the Legislature's being restrained by a reference to the past, from exercising its free discretion with regard to the future. With how much greater warmth would he have rejected such an assumption, in the case of a protecting duty, which encourages a system of cultivation unnecessarily expensive, which acts like an oppressive tax on the export of our manufactures, and which operates with a most malignant and widely extended influence on the industry, energy, and resources of our Indian Empire. He observes, "It is chiefly on the presumed ground of our being bound by a parliamentary sanction, heretofore given to the African slave-trade, that this argument against the abolition is rested. Is there any one regulation of

"any part of our commerce, which, if this argument  
 "be valid, may not equally be objected to, on the  
 "ground of its affecting some man's patrimony, some  
 "man's property, or some man's expectations. Let it  
 "never be forgotten, that the argument I am canvassing,  
 "would be just as strong, if the possession affected were  
 "small, and the possessors humble ; for on every prin-  
 "ciple of justice, the property of every single indi-  
 "vidual, or number of individuals, is as sacred as that  
 "of the great body of West Indians. It is scarcely  
 "possible to lay a duty on any one article which may  
 "not, when first imposed, be said in some way to af-  
 "fect the property of individuals, and even of some  
 "entire classes of the community. If the laws res-  
 "pecting the slave-trade imply a contract for its per-  
 "petual continuance, I will venture to say, there does  
 "not pass a year without some act equally pledging  
 "the faith of Parliament, and the perpetuating of some  
 "other branch of commerce."

It is not then on the plea of a parliamentary pledge,  
 but simply on the grounds of the extent of their distress,  
 and their inability to relieve themselves, that the West-  
 India planters should found their claims for support.

But this inability, however real, will perpetually be  
 called in question, until they have introduced every  
 practicable improvement into their system of cultiva-  
 tion. When they have relieved that system from its  
 superfluous machinery, and have made arrangements  
 for the gradual elevation of their slaves to the condition  
 of free labourers, they will have prepared themselves to  
 come before Parliament with a better case ; and will  
 have laid the foundation for such a change in the struc-  
 ture of Colonial society, as will ultimately contribute  
 greatly to their prosperity, and will exhibit in our West  
 India Islands, another happy illustration of the truth of  
 the position, that the labour of freemen is cheaper than  
 the labour of slaves.

## Appendix.



Many of the following proofs and illustrations of the truth which I have endeavoured to establish, might probably have been introduced with propriety into the preceding letter. I was, however, unwilling to interrupt the train of reasoning, by any additions to an accumulation of testimony, already, perhaps, sufficiently extensive, and some of the succeeding remarks did not fall under my observation until the Letter was printed. I had no opportunity of seeing Mr. Ramsay's "Essay on the treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies," or Dr. Dickson's tract "On the Mitigation of Slavery," until the preceding pages were in the press; and I have, consequently, been enabled to introduce only a few brief remarks from these very valuable works. The latter contains so much that bears directly on the question at issue, that I am unwilling not to avail myself of it more freely; and I shall, therefore, extract from it rather copiously in this Appendix, after adducing the testimony of Burke, Franklin, and Beattie, in favour of the position I have advocated.

### BURKE.

"I am the more convinced of the necessity of these indulgences,  
"as slaves certainly cannot go through so much work as free men.  
"The mind goes a great way in every thing, and when a man knows  
"that his labour is for himself, and that the more he labours, the  
"more he is to acquire; this consciousness carries him through, and  
"supports him beneath fatigues, under which he would otherwise have  
"sunk."—*Burke on European Settlements.*

### FRANKLIN.

"It is an ill-grounded opinion, that by the labour of slaves, America  
"may possibly vie in cheapness of manufactures with Great Britain.  
"The labour of slaves can never be so cheap here, as the labour of  
"working men is in Great Britain. Any one may compute it.  
"Reckon, then, the interest of the first-purchase of a slave, the insur-

“ance or risk on his life, his clothing and diet, expenses in his sickness, and loss of time, loss by his neglect of business, (neglect which is natural to the man who is not to be benefitted by his own care or diligence), expense of a driver to keep him at work, and his pilfering from time to time, (almost every slave being from the nature of slavery a thief,) and compare the whole amount with the wages of a manufacturer of iron or wool, in England, you will see that labour is much cheaper there, than it ever can be by negroes here.”—*Franklin on the Peopling of Countries.*

DR. BEATTIE.

“That the proprietors of West-India estates would be in any respect materially injured by employing free servants, (if these could be had,) in their several manufactures, is highly improbable, and has, indeed, been absolutely denied by those who were well informed on this subject. A clergyman of Virginia assured me, that a white man does double the work of a slave; which will not seem wonderful, if we consider that the former works for himself, and the latter for another; that by the law one is protected, the other oppressed; and that in the articles of food and clothing, relaxation and rest, the free man has innumerable advantages. It may, therefore, be presumed, that if all who serve in the Colonies were free, the same work would be performed by half the number, which is now performed by the whole. The very soil becomes more fertile under the hands of free men, so says an intelligent French author, (Le Poivre,) who, after observing that the products of Cochin China are the same in kind with those of the West-Indies, but of better quality, and in greater abundance, gives for a reason, that, ‘the former are cultivated by free men, and the latter by slaves;’ and therefore, argues, ‘that the negroes beyond the Atlantic ought to be made free.’ ‘The earth,’ says he, ‘which multiplies her productions with profusion under the hands of a free-born labourer, seems to shrink into barrenness under the sweat of the slave.’”

The Honourable JOSHUA STEELE.

The honourable Joshua Steele, whose communications form so valuable a part of Dr. Dickson’s work, was a very intelligent gentleman, of large West-India property, who, previous to visiting his estate in Barbadoes, lived many years in London, in habits of intimacy with

persons of rank and character. He was Vice-president of the London Society of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, and was supposed to be one of the founders of the Dublin Society. He went to Barbadoes late in life, where he was a Member of the Council, and officiated some time as Chief Justice. He was also the Founder of the Barbadoes Society of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce, and President, till it had acquired some strength, when the Governor became President, and Mr. Steele Vice-president. He arrived in Barbadoes in 1780. The Society was founded in 1781, and in 1787 and 1788, "he contrived to give in the Barbadoes Gazette, (by his account of several conversations), faithful copies of the material part of the manuscript minutes of the proceedings of the Society in their Committees," under the signature of Philo Xylon.

In 1799, about 10 years after his arrival in Barbadoes, he writes to Dr. Dickson, who had also been a resident in that island as private Secretary to Governor Hay: "Upon observing all this," (the abuses which still continued on his plantation, after his attempts to correct them in the ordinary way), "I resolved to make a further experiment, in order to try whether I could not obtain the labour of my negroes by *voluntary* means, instead of the old method—by *violence*, and that in such a way as should be a proof against the insidious insinuations of my superintendent; when, for a small pecuniary reward over and above their usual allowances, the poorest, feeblest, and by character the most indolent negroes in the whole gang, cheerfully performed the holing of my land for canes, (generally said to be the most laborious work,) for less than a fourth part of the stated price paid to the undertakers for holing. Of this there is a pretty exact account given in Philo Xylon's eighth letter. I repeated the like experiment the following year with equal success, and on the 18th Nov. 1789, I gave also my slaves tenements of land, and pecuniary wages, by the hour, the day, or the week, for their labour and services, nearly according to the plan described in Philo Xylon's ninth letter, and soon after dismissed my superintendent." The account to which he alludes in Philo Xylon's eighth letter, is the following:—"A planter offered a premium of two-pence halfpenny a day, or a pistareen per week, with the usual allowance to holers, of a dram with molasses, to any twenty-five of his negroes, men and women, who would undertake to hole for canes, an acre per day,

“ at about ninety-six and a half holes for each negro to the acre. The whole gang were ready to undertake it, but only fifty of the volunteers were accepted, and many among those, who on much lighter occasions, had usually pleaded infirmity and inability. But the ground having been moist, they holed twelve acres within six days, with great ease : having had an hour, more or less, every evening, to spare ; and the like experiment was repeated with the same success. More experiments, with such premiums, on weeding and deep hoeing, were made by task-work per acre, and all succeeded in like manner, their premiums being all perpetually paid them in proportion to their performance. But afterwards, some of the same people being put (without premium) to weed on a loose cultivated soil in the common manner, eighteen negroes did not do as much in a given time, as six had performed of the like sort of work, a few days before, with the premium of the two-pence halfpenny.

“ But these heterodox experiments did not pass without censure. However, the plain answer is, that by the last experiment, where eighteen negroes, under the whip, did not do as much as six with the premium, the planter was clearly convinced that saving time, by doing in *one day* as much as would otherwise require *three days*, was worth more than double the premium, the timely effects on vegetation being critical. And moreover, it was remarkable, that during the operations under the premium, there were no pretended disorders, no crowding to the sick-house. But according to the vulgar mode of governing negro-slaves, they feel only the desponding fear of punishment for doing less than they ought, without being sensible that the settled allowance of food and clothing is given, and should be accepted as a reward for doing work : while, in task-work, the expectation of winning the reward, and the fear of losing it, have a double operation on their minds to exert their endeavours.”

In Philo Xylon's ninth letter, to which he alludes, Mr. Steele shows, that by giving his slaves tenements of land, and pecuniary wages, the expense of employing the labour of three hundred copyhold bond slaves, including the value of the land given to them, is only £1283 15s. Od While that of three hundred slaves under the

ordinary management, is at £5 14s each . . .	1710	0	0
Making a saving of currency . . . . .	426	5	0
Or sterling . . . . .	334	9	3

The advantage of the plan pursued by Mr. STEELE, is still more evident from the following extract, from the "Supplement to the Privy Council's Report." It is taken from the reply to the 17th of the Queries, from His Excellency Governor PARRY,

Answered by

JOSHUA STEELE, Esq.

A Planter of 1068 acres, in the Parishes of St. John, St. Philip, and St. George, in the Island of Barbadoes.

"On a plantation of 288 slaves, in June 1780, viz. 90 men, 82 women, 56 boys, and 60 girls, by the exertions of an able and honest manager, there were only 15 births, and no less than 57 deaths, in three years and three months. An alteration was made in the mode of governing the slaves, the whips were taken from all the white servants, all arbitrary punishments were abolished, and all offences were tried, and sentence passed by a negro court. In four years and three months, under this change of government, there were 44 births, and only 41 deaths, of which 10 deaths were of superannuated men and women, and past labour, some above 80 years old. *But in the same interval, the annual nett clearance of the estate was above three times more than it had been for ten years before.*"—From the Privy Council's Report, part 3, p. 472.

Dr. Dickson, who had carefully examined the subject of slave labour, and who has published some excellent Tables of Labour Annuities, the result of practical experience and scientific investigation, considers the preceding estimates of saving and profit to be stated with great moderation. He notices them in many parts of his work, and among others in the following passage.

"Thus then, all things conspire to prove, that the returns of slave labour on sugar plantations have been, and are still, very rapidly declining. The ground on which the planter stands has never been firm, and is now fast sinking under his feet. To save himself from the opening gulph, he must reduce the enormous expense of producing his article, by some such means as those recommended by the success of Mr. Steele and other wise economists in sugar cultivation. He must call forth the latent vigour of his slaves by rewards, and abate in every possible way, the waste, theft, idleness, desertion, pretended sickness, and secret reluctance and opposition, which must always more or less diminish the labour of slaves. 'For a slave,' as



Adam Smith observes, 'can have no other interest than to eat and "waste as much, and work as little, as possible."' "

"We might be thought to refine too much, were we to attempt to calculate the diminution of labour caused by these *moral evils* of slavery. And beside, we could offer no estimate half so satisfactory as that given above, of the actual saving by the system recommended; which saving is nothing else than the *amount of what is lost, by attempting the impossibility of curing the moral incapacity of slaves by force instead of reward.*"

Mr. BOTHAM.

On the mode of cultivating a sugar plantation at Batavia, &c.

"It may be desirable to know that sugar, better and cheaper than in our Island, is produced in the East Indies by free labourers.—China, Bengal, and Malabar produce quantities of sugar and spirits, but the most considerable estates are near Batavia. The proprietor is generally a rich Dutchman, who builds on it substantial works. He rents the estate off (of 300 or more acres) to a Chinese, who superintends it, and relets it to free men in parcels of 50 or 60 acres, which they plant at so much per pecul (133½lb) of the sugar produced. The superintendent collects people to take off the crop. One set, with their carts and buffaloes, cut the canes, carry them to the mill, and grind them; a second set boil the sugar, and a third set clay and basket it for the market; all at so much per pecul. Thus the renter knows what every pecul will cost him. He has no unnecessary expense; for when the crop is over, the last men go home; and for seven months in the year, the cane-planters only remain, preparing the next crop. By dividing the labour, it is cheaper and better done. *After spending two years in the West Indies*, I returned to the East in 1776, and conducted sugar-works in Bencoolen on similar principles with the Dutch. Having experienced the difference of labourers for profit and labourers from force, I can assert that the savings by the former are very considerable. By following as nearly as possible the East India mode, and consolidating the distilleries, I do suppose *our sugar Islands might be better worked than they now are by two-thirds, or indeed one-half of the present force.* Let it be considered how much labour is lost by overseeing the forced labourer, which is saved when he works for his own profit *I have stated with the strictest veracity, the plain matter of fact,*

*"that sugar-estates can be worked cheaper by free persons than slaves."*

"Marsden, in his history of Sumatra," says Dr. Dickson, "highly commends Mr. Botham's management of the sugar-works at Ben-coolen by free labourers, and says that the expenses, *particularly of the slaves*, frustrated many former attempts of the English to cultivate the sugar-cane profitably at that place."

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### SIERRA LEONE.

This Colony may be said to owe its origin to the liberality and benevolent exertions of the celebrated GRANVILLE SHARP. At the time when the decision of Lord Mansfield, in the memorable case of the Negro, Somerset, had established the axiom, that *"as soon as any slave sets his foot on English ground, he becomes free,"* there were many negroes in London who had been brought over by their masters. As a large proportion of these had no longer owners to support them, nor any parish from which they could claim relief, they fell into great distress, and resorted in crowds to their patron, Granville Sharp, for support.

But his means were quite inadequate to maintain them all, even if such a plan had been desirable for the objects of his compassion, and "he formed a scheme for their future permanent support. He determined upon sending them to some spot in Africa, the general land of their ancestors, where, when they were once landed under a proper leader, and with proper provisions for a time, and proper implements of husbandry, they might, with but moderate industry, provide for themselves." "Just at this time, Mr. Smeathman, who had lived for some years at the foot of the Sierra Leone mountains, and who knew the climate, and nature of the soil and productions there, who had formed a plan for colonizing those parts, was in London, inviting adventurers, but particularly the black poor, to accompany him on his return to his ancient abode." Measures for this purpose were concerted by him and Granville Sharp, but Mr. Smeathman, who was to have conducted the black colonists, died before they sailed, and the care, and for some time the expense of this bold enterprise, devolved entirely on Mr. Sharp. Nothing could be more discouraging than the calamities which befell the undertaking from its very outset. Of 400 black people who left the Thames on the 22nd Feb. 1787, un-

der convoy of his majesty's sloop of war *Nautilus*, not more than 130 (who were afterwards reduced to 40) remained alive and in one body at the end of the rainy season, into which they had been thrown by the death of Mr. Smeathman, notwithstanding Mr. Sharp's strenuous efforts to avoid it. Disaster followed disaster. Famine, disease, discontent, desertion, succeeded each other with frightful rapidity, till the year 1789, when the colony, again in a state of improvement, was almost annihilated by a hostile attack from a neighbouring chief. About that time a company was established in England for the purpose of carrying forward the benevolent views of the founder, which afterwards obtained a royal charter of incorporation. In 1792, about 1100 negroes arrived from Nova Scotia, under the command of Lieutenant Clarkson. These were negroes who had been induced to enlist in the British army during the American war, by an offer of freedom, and "who were afterwards carried to Nova Scotia, under a promise of "regular allotments of land, which promise had unfortunately not "been fulfilled;" the climate being unfavourable to them, they solicited and obtained permission to join the colony at Sierra Leone. In the year 1800, their numbers were increased by the arrival of 550 Maroons, who, having risen against the colonists of Jamaica, and been induced, by the terror of blood-hounds, to surrender, were carried to Nova Scotia, and subsequently to Sierra Leone. Of such elements, (to which have since been added the negroes liberated from the holds of captured slave ships,) was the colony of Sierra Leone composed; and nothing less than the extraordinary energy, fortitude, and perseverance of our illustrious countryman, could have saved it from the destruction with which it was so often menaced. "Certainly without "him the Sierra Leone Company would not have been formed, and "had he not supported the colony, when it so often hung as it were "by a thread, till the formation of this Company, all had been lost." This is not the place to follow it through all the vicissitudes of its subsequent history, but as its actual condition is little known, I will give a few extracts from various authorities, which will enable the judicious reader to form his own opinion how far it is likely to realize the expectation of its illustrious founder, and to be "one day the means of "spreading the benefits of civilization and Christianity through a considerable part of the vast continent of Africa."

On the 31st Oct. 1787, Granville Sharp writes, "I have had but

“melancholy accounts of my poor little ill-thriven swarthy daughter,  
“the unfortunate colony of Sierra Leone.”

The following was the population in 1820 and 1822, as given in the  
Missionary Register of Dec. 1822.

	July 8, 1820.	Jan. 1, 1822.
“Europeans . . . . .	120 . . .	128
“Maroons . . . . .	594 . . .	601
“Nova Scotians . . . . .	730 . . .	722
“West Indians and Americans . . . . .	— . . .	85
“Natives . . . . .	1046 . . .	3526
“Liberated Africans . . . . .	8076 . . .	7969
“Disbanded Soldiers . . . . .	1216 . . .	1103
“Kroomen . . . . .	727 . . .	947
Totals . . . . .	<u>12,509</u>	<u>15,081</u>

“The chief increase is apparently in the class of natives, while that  
“of liberated Africans seems to be somewhat diminished; but this is,  
“in part, occasioned by a difference of arrangement in the two returns.  
“The large number of natives in the native villages of the Peninsula,  
“amounting in the last return to 1925, would have been divided, accor-  
“ding to the arrangement in the return of 1820—into natives, properly  
“so called; that is, as we conceive, the Aborigines of the Peninsula;  
“and liberated Africans, living in villages, but not under a superin-  
“tendent. In the return of 1820, this distinction was made; and  
“then the whole number, amounting to 1468, was divided into 400 of  
“the first class, and 1068 of the second. Both classes being called  
“‘natives’ in the last return, the number of liberated Africans ap-  
“pears to have diminished; while it has, in fact, greatly increased,  
“independently of the addition of 1590 since the date of the last re-  
“turn. We collect from these data, that the number of liberated  
“Africans, of all descriptions, in the colony, on the 1st of August,  
“was upwards of ELEVEN THOUSAND.

“Still there is an increase of the class ranked as ‘natives’ in the  
“last return, to the amount of nearly 1000; of these, about one-half  
“are in Freetown, and the other half are chiefly resident in the settle-  
“ments of the liberated Africans. This augmentation is derived, we  
“conceive, from the influx of the people bordering on the colony; and  
“is a gratifying indication of the growth of mutual confidence between  
“the colony and its neighbours.”

“into enterprising traders, skilful mechanics, and industrious farmers ;  
 “supporting themselves and their families in comfort, and performing  
 “respectably, the social, and even religious duties. They discharge  
 “the duties of jurors, constables, and other officers, with much propriety, and are a fine example of a community of black men living  
 “as free men, enjoying the benefit of the British constitution, regularly  
 “attending public worship, and gradually improving, by means of  
 “schools and other institutions, in knowledge and civilization. This  
 “happy change has been effected by the blessing of God on the labours  
 “of English Missionaries. In 1819, the number of children in the  
 “schools at the various settlements, was 2014 !”

*Extracts from the Third Annual Report of the American Society for Colonizing the Free People of Colour of the United States.*

“What the Society propose to do with regard to colonizing, is to procure a suitable territory on the Coast of Africa, for such of the free people of colour as may choose to avail themselves of this asylum, and for such slaves as their proprietors may please to emancipate.

“So far is this scheme from being impracticable, that one resembling it in all respects, was accomplished by a private society in England, more than 30 years ago.

“In despite of every representation to the contrary, the colony of Sierra Leone boasts, at this moment, a greater degree of prosperity, than distinguished any one of the British Colonies, now the United States of America, at the same period after its first plantation. The population of Sierra Leone ; its commerce and navigation ; its churches, schools, and charitable institutions ; its towns and hamlets ; its edifices public and private ; surpass those of any one of these states, at any time within twenty-five years from its first settlement.”

It is for the reader to estimate the value of the preceding authorities, and to draw from them his own conclusions with regard to the present state and future prospects of Sierra Leone. It is for him also to decide how far the prosperity of a community formed of such unpromising materials, may be regarded as an exemplification of what the negro race may exhibit when rescued from slavery ; how far such a Colony of Africans, of many nations and languages, educated on their own shores, with civil rights, political privileges, and religious advantages, and in frequent communication with their countrymen from the interior, is calculated to civilize Africa ; how far it may be expected to send forth, through a thousand channels, those fertilizing streams which will clothe the moral deserts of that injured Continent with verdure and beauty.